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PR 93-143

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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TO: Mr. George Dillon

COMPANY: Federal Communications Commission  
Aviation & Marine Branch

FAX NUMBER:

FROM: Katherine M. Giblin

DATE: Mon Sept 13 1993

TIME: 1:45 pm EDT

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September 12, 1993

Mr. George Dillon  
Chief of Aviation and Marine Branch  
Federal Communications Commission  
2025 M Street, NW, #1700C-2  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Mr. Dillon:

I understand you are closely involved with a pending decision regarding the registration of 406-type EPIRBs for ocean-going vessels.

I applaud your efforts in helping to improve the safety aspects of these procedures by making registration of such EPIRBs mandatory, but I implore you to take the regulation one step further: please include in your regulation that the EPIRBs must be registered at the time of purchase, not at some point thereafter.

Mike Plant was not only one of my closest friends but a first-rate offshore sailor with whom I worked on a professional basis for several years. You are no doubt aware of his demise last fall en route to compete in a professional long-distance yacht race. Mike's tragic death points to the crying need to have EPIRBs registered at the time of purchase, which would leave no possibility of authorities such as the Coast Guard not having the proper information to assist a person in need simply because his or her safety equipment was not registered.

Even the most skilled, and normally very conscientious and organized, sailors like Mike Plant can, under duress and last-minute deadlines filled with hundreds of details, forget to complete the seemingly "smaller, less significant" chores like registering safety equipment. Mike's failure to make the time to register his EPIRB at some point after he had purchased it could well have cost him his life, a horrible, glaring reality that his family and many friends like myself are now left with for the rest of our lives.

While we can't change what has happened to Mike, we can try to learn from those misfortunes and help others avoid them in the future. Requiring the point-of-purchase registration of EPIRBs, a very simple procedure conducted between the purchaser and retailer (so as not to leave all responsibility to the retailer), will undoubtedly help save other well-intended sailors like Mike in the future.

Please make EPIRB registration mandatory -- at the time of purchase.

Sincerely yours;



Katherine M. Giblin  
Director of Public Relations

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Mr. George Dillon  
Chief of Aviation and Marine Branch  
Federal Communication Commission  
2025 M Street NW, 1700C2  
Washington, DC 20554

93-143

Subject: Proposed regulations for EPIRB registration

Dear Mr. Dillon:

We would like to commend the FCC for recognizing the need for new regulations which would make EPIRB registration mandatory. However, we believe very strongly that the regulations presently proposed do not go far enough in ensuring that the registration is actually accomplished. The intent of the proposed rule making would best be served by requiring that registration be done at the time of purchase; i.e. that the sale of an EPIRB be conditional upon the completion of the registration card.

We believe that the "point of purchase" requirement benefits all parties involved. It greatly improves the odds for sailors or aviators in distress to be rescued, and facilitates conservation of Search and Rescue resources.

When considering the amount of time and effort dedicated to the construction and implementation of the EPIRB system to date, it only seems logical to require the registration at the time of purchase. Without this step, the effectiveness of the entire system is seriously compromised.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

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Mr. George Dillon  
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Sincerely,

Mary and Frank Plant  
Hugh Plant  
Linda and Bob Simmons  
Helen Davis  
Julia Plant and Peter Thomas  
Thomas Plant

cc: Senator David Durenberger  
C. Michelle Winston NOAA/NESDIS

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